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## Will Recession Mean an End to the Baby Boom?

Just a random thought over lunch, I wonder how the recession will impact Australia's sky-high birth rate?

The official statistics tell us there were 280,781 babies born in 2007, the highest number on record and a 14% increase on the 246,821 born in 2002. You don't need statistics to convince me. The little screamers are spreading like the plague in my inner-Sydney suburb.

Anecdotally, it would seem a large proportion of the increase has come from higher socio-economic groups and that more and more university educated parents are willing to spend the early years of their baby's life at home. Couples have been willing to make the required financial sacrifices in the knowledge that jobs are plentiful and career progression will resume unimpeded when the stay-at-home parent returns to work.

That might change now that jobs are difficult to come by. Not only might the stay-at-home parent not have a job to return to, but living off one salary is decidedly risky – especially if your partner works in finance.

I don't know if this theory has legs or not. Perhaps the baby boom has more to do with changing social norms or the government's financial incentives? One thing's for sure. Much has changed in the world since our last recession 17 years ago and the impact of a modern recession might be very different from its predecessor. Any predictions?